



LUTHERANCH EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM

RIDER INFORMATION PACKET

Dear Parents, Participants and Caregivers,

Thank you for choosing Lutheranch. We look forward to serving you! Please read through all the information in this packet and keep it to refer to as you have questions. It covers important information to help you get started and continue in the program.

The Lutheranch Equestrian Program is part of NovusWay Ministries. Our programs range from therapeutic riding lessons, to trail rides and equestrian clinics. We are a PATH (Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship) Member Center and we follow American Camp Association standards. The quality of our programs and our participants' safety are of the utmost importance to us.

We are so excited that you have joined the program and we can't wait to learn and grow with you. Welcome to the family!

Happy Trails,

Gretchen Ahrens

Gretchen Ahrens
Program Director, Equestrian and Summer Camp
Lutheranch
342 McGinnis Road, Lot 2, Tallapoosa, GA 30176
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ABOUT US

History/Mission

NovusWay Ministries is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America with four sites (Lutheranch, Lutheridge, Luthersprings and Lutherock) spread across the southeastern United States. Each of our four locations showcases a beautiful setting to reconnect with nature and Jesus, and we welcome all to share in the experience of our community. Built to become closer to God, we see your time at our sites as a chance to grow, learn and be renewed.

The MISSION of NovusWay is to provide programs and experiences in places set apart where all people can experience Christ-centered community, be transformed through relationship with God and God's creation, and leave equipped for mission.

In 2007, the 519-acre Red Paw Ranch, later renamed Lutheranch, was purchased by NovusWay as a central location to serve constituents in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. The former landowner's residence was opened as a small retreat center in the fall of 2007. The residence was named Holy Trinity House and hosted its first retreat in November of that same year. In August 2017, the McKanna-Sandroek Retreat Center was dedicated and opened with 41 guest rooms, 3 conference rooms, a full-service kitchen and a large outdoor patio. Lutheranch expanded onsite activities to include a lakefront outdoor worship chapel, archery course, athletic field, group challenge course and marked hiking trails.

In 2020, the Lutheranch Equestrian Program launched with renovations to the existing equestrian facilities and large covered arena. The 20-stall barn, meeting room, kitchen, office, restroom, two tack rooms, covered arena, trails, round pen and multiple paddocks for the horses provide the ideal facility for all things equestrian!



Programs

Lutheranch offers a variety of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies, which are described below. At the time of your assessment, staff will discuss which programs are most appropriate for the Participant. Programs are offered for riders ages 5 and up. There is no upper age limit as long as age related contraindications are not present.

For more information on dates and pricing, or to sign up for a program, call or email Gretchen at gahrens@novusway.org, 404-583-4591 or visit our website at www.lutheranch.org/equestrian.

Therapeutic Riding Program: Therapeutic riding lessons are provided for children, youth and adults with developmental or physical disabilities. These lessons focus on teaching a riding skill while simultaneously improving communication, social skills, physical ability and stamina, and life skills. Horse leaders and side walkers are provided as needed to allow the participant to progress as safely and independently as possible. All lessons are conducted by PATH, International certified riding instructors. Therapeutic riding lessons are typically group sessions with one instructor teaching 2 to 4 participants.

Recreational Riding Program: The goals for recreational riding lessons focus on horsemanship skills. Riders advance through riding levels as they develop a secure riding seat and position, and develop communication with their horse. Upper level riders may work on discipline specific skills and riding. Recreational riding lessons are also typically group lessons with one instructor teaching 2 to 4 participants.

Summer Camps: Day and overnight horse camps are offered in the months of June and July for elementary and middle school children.

Trail Rides: Experience the beauty of West Georgia by horseback. A certified guide will lead you and your friends, coworkers or church group thorough a two-hour experience including a safety briefing, a mini lesson in the arena, time spent on Lutheranch's beautiful trails and a group photo opportunity.

Weekend Programs: From women's retreats to equestrian themed weekends on the ranch, Lutheranch offers something for everyone, from youth to adults. Sign up for one of our weekend retreats and relax as we provide meals, lodging and quality programming.

Clinics and Events: Lutheranch offers a variety of Continuing Education Clinics for instructors, volunteers and horse lovers. More information about upcoming clinics can be found on our website at www.lutheranch.org/equestrian

Non-Discrimination Policy

Lutheranch's Equestrian Program does not and shall not discriminate and accepts participants regardless of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin or disability.

Lutheranch Staff Directory/Address

Gretchen Ahrens, Lutheranch Program Director, Summer Camp and Equine

gahrens@novusway.org

404-583-4591

Christina Yarnold, Lutheranch Executive Site Director

cyarnold@novusway.org

678-857-8501

NovusWay Registrar's Office (for questions regarding summer camps, weekend retreats and billing/payment processing)

Registration@novusway.org

828-209-6301

Volunteering

ranchvolunteers@novusway.org

404-583-4591

**The address for the Lutheranch Equestrian Facility is:
342 McGinnis Road, Tallapoosa, Georgia, 30176**

Come in the gate, turn left and follow the arrows/signs down the hill to the barn. Note: on Highway 100, you will see signs directing you to turn for Lutheranch. Follow your GPS and turn on Poplar Springs Road. Do NOT turn at the signs. Those signs take you to our Retreat Center on the other side of the property. Also, as you get close to Lutheranch, cell phone reception can be spotty so we recommend downloading and printing the directions from our website.

*****If you are lost, running late, or need help on the day of an event, program or lesson, call Gretchen at 404-583-4591**



GETTING STARTED

Rider Assessment

Prior to entering the program, all riders (recreational or therapeutic) must complete an assessment. **The fee for the assessment is \$50. (See billing information for more details on fees).** Assessments can be scheduled online at www.lutheranch.org. During the assessment, a rider's skills will be evaluated and goals, scheduling, and physical and developmental needs will be discussed.

**Please note that PATH International has determined some conditions are contraindicative to riding. If any of these conditions are present and Lutheranch believes it is unsafe for a student to participate, the student will not be allowed to participate in the program.*

Once an assessment is scheduled, you will be emailed required paperwork. Please complete this paperwork and bring with you to the assessment. Riders without completed and signed paperwork will not be allowed to participate in any mounted activities, even at the assessment.

Wear close-toed shoes and long pants to the assessment. We recommend waiting to purchase your own riding helmet until after the assessment. Riders will be fitted for a helmet as a part of the assessment.

Riders who have taken more than one year off from riding will be required to complete a new assessment prior to reentering the program.

Once the initial assessment is completed, we will make a program recommendation for the riding student and then see if we have a current opening in the schedule at the appropriate riding level. In the unlikely case that an opening does not currently exist, then we will put the participant on a waiting list and you will be notified as soon as an opening becomes available. Riding sessions are typically offered on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

Scheduling Lessons

One-hour lessons are scheduled once/week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays or Saturdays for a 10-week session.

To provide quality lessons for all students, riders will be assigned a riding level at their initial assessment and placed in a lesson with other students at the same level. Following the assessment, the program director will contact rider/parent to discuss available times at the appropriate level.

As riders progress, they will have the opportunity to "level up" to the next skill level which may require selecting a new lesson time.

At the beginning of each new 10-week session, current riders will have the option to keep their lesson time or, if necessary, select a new lesson time. Skipping a session of lessons will result in forfeiture of reserved lesson time and may require selecting a new lesson time.

Paperwork

The following paperwork is required for participation in Lutheranch Equestrian Programs:

- All participants and volunteers in any equestrian program must agree to and sign the Lutheranch Equestrian Waiver.
- Rider Application including photo consent, liability release and medical history and emergency medical authorization form must be completed prior to a recreational or therapeutic riding assessment.
- Medical Release must be signed by a doctor prior to participation in any mounted therapeutic riding activities.
- Signed Code of Conduct, Barn Rules and Policies acknowledgement form must be completed for all recreational and therapeutic riding students.

For on-going activities such as riding lessons, an annual paperwork update must be completed prior to the rider's first session in a new calendar year, including a new medical release for therapeutic riding participants. Paperwork updates will be emailed to participants upon registration for their first session of the year.

RIDERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UNTIL ALL REQUIRED PAPERWORK HAS BEEN TURNED IN.

The program director, instructor or designated volunteer will check for paperwork at the beginning of the first lesson of the session.

PAYMENT POLICIES

Therapeutic and Recreational Riding Lesson Tuition

- \$450 for 10-week group lesson session (one hour/week with 2-4 students in a class)
- \$600 for a 10-week private lesson session (one hour/week)
- Tuition can be pro-rated for students who join a class mid-session
- Drop in lessons are available at \$65/lesson and can be scheduled through the website at www.lutheranch.org

Payment is required with registration for all programs/lessons and must be received prior to participation.

After the assessment and upon scheduling lessons with the program director, participants will be sent an invoice for service, which can be paid via cash, check or credit card.

At the first lesson of each session, instructor or staff will confirm that payment (or payment arrangements) has been made. If necessary, payment can be completed at the barn at the beginning of the first lesson. Please note: a 3.5% point of sale transaction fee will be charged for any credit card transactions processed at the barn. We will not process credit card payments of less than \$5.00.

If desired, arrangements can be made for session payments to be broken down into 3 payments/session.

Riders who have not paid at or before the first lesson, or made pre-approved arrangements for payment, will not be allowed to ride.

Payment by Outside Agencies

Lutheranch does not accept insurance as payment for services. Lutheranch will not bill third party payers. For riders whose services are covered by a community service agency, waiver, scholarship or other assistance fund, an invoice can be provided to parent/guardian or participant, but it is the rider's responsibility to ensure the invoice is submitted to the appropriate party and paid promptly. To ensure payment is credited to the proper account, please ensure that any outside payments include the rider's name on the subject line of the check. If an outside agency cannot process payment prior to the first lesson, a Responsibility for Payment form must be submitted

Any participant (in any program) with an outstanding balance from the previous session will not be allowed to register for the next session until the balance on the account has been paid in full.

Late Fees

All rider fees that are past due by 30+days or are not paid according to the previous payment arrangements, will be assessed a minimum of \$20.00 charge per month to cover administrative expenses on the balance.

If a rider needs to drop out of a session without finishing the 10 weeks, a \$50 fee will be assessed on top of the session fee unless it is medically necessary. No refunds or credits towards a future session will be given for dropping out of class. If it is deemed medically necessary to drop out of a session early as documented in writing by a medical professional, a refund for the remaining unused classes may be requested.

Scholarship Policy

Lutheranch is a non-profit organization and as such does not currently have funds available to provide scholarships for riders. However, as a ministry, Lutheranch is committed to helping make it possible for riders to participate in the program, regardless of financial status.

If financial assistance is needed, Lutheranch will provide a list of local agencies that offer assistance and will make an effort to connect participants with local churches that may be able to help.



WHEN YOU COME TO THE BARN

Barn Rules

Riders will be given a copy of the barn rules in their rider paperwork packet. These rules will be reviewed during the assessment. It is important for all family members and anyone else who will be coming to the barn with the participant to understand and follow the Lutheranch Barn Rules.

The Lutheranch Barn Rules are as follows:

- Observe the 20 mph speed limit on the Lutheranch grounds.
- Park only in designated parking areas.
- Smoking is allowed only in designated areas and is not permitted within 100 feet of the barn. Cigarette butts must be completely extinguished and properly disposed of in a trash receptacle.
- Pets are not allowed, except for service dogs with prior approval.
- Entering areas designated as restricted, such as the feed room or paddocks, requires special permission from staff.
- Parents, siblings or other guests who are present at lessons must stay in their vehicle, in the barn lounge, on the screen porch, or on the observation patios.
- Participants must wear long pants, close toed shoes or boots with ½" heel and an ASTM/SEI approved riding helmet.
- Approach any horse only with permission of staff/trained volunteer.
- Sudden movements and loud noises may spook a horse. No running, jumping or yelling.
- Do not go under a horse's neck or belly.
- Pet horses in their neutral zone, on the neck or shoulder.
- Always speak to a horse before approaching and be sure that they have acknowledged you with their eyes and ears.
- Use a bucket or feed pan to feed a horse. Do not use your hand.
- Do not climb over or sit on fences or gates.
- Return all items to where you found them at the end of your lesson.

Code of Conduct

All participants are expected to follow the code of conduct when at the barn. Participants will complete a signed copy of the Lutheranch Equestrian Code of Conduct as a part of their rider application.

The Lutheranch Equestrian Code of Conduct is as follows:

- Respect all animals and humans. No abusive language or actions will be tolerated.
- Respect all property and care for each item as if it were your own. No graffiti, put items back where you found them, no throwing or dropping items, etc.
- Respect other's property. Do not use other's items without permission.
- Refrain from loud, abrupt actions or behaviors that may startle the horses.
- Do not engage in disruptive, unsafe or inappropriate behavior.
- No smoking within 100 feet of the barn.
- No guns, weapons or alcoholic beverages at the barn without prior signed permission of executive site director.

Parking

Parking is allowed only in designated areas. Please do not park on the grass. Riders should park in front of the barn. Leave designated handicapped accessible parking spaces for those who need them. Overflow rider parking is in front of the paddock, near the bench. Volunteers/staff should park in front of the Bear's Den and may park along side the road if that fills up.

Attire

Riders must wear close-toed shoes (No Crocks, sandals or flipflops) at the barn at all times. Boots with a 1/2" heel are preferred. Long pants must be worn and no slick (nylon jogging type) pants. Many riders prefer to ride in riding tights or breeches. An ASTM/SEI approved helmet must be worn at all times. If a rider does not have their own helmet, Lutheranch will provide one. Some riders prefer to wear gloves. The program director can provide a list of local tack stores which sell rider clothing, helmets and boots.

Children

Children not participating in lessons and under the age of 14 may not be left unattended and must be monitored and in direct vision of their parent/adult guardian at all times while at the facility. During a lesson, parents and siblings may stay in their car, in the barn lounge or on the screened in porch or on the arena observation patios. Barn rules must be followed by anyone who is on the property. Please review the barn rules with your children prior to arriving at the barn and do not allow siblings to run or play in or around the barn. Lutheranch has over 500 acres, a large athletic field and multiple hiking trails which may be used by parents/siblings during a lesson. Ask the program director

for a trail map and notify the program director before going on the trails. The lake and all buildings, pastures and paddocks are off limits.

Dogs and Other Animals

Dogs and other animals are not permitted at the barn. Service animals will only be allowed with the appropriate paperwork and pre-approval by the program director. Emotional support animals are not allowed at the barn.

Firearms, Weapons, Drugs and Alcohol

Weapons and illegal drugs are not allowed on Lutheranch property. Firearms and alcohol are allowed ONLY with prior express written permission of the Lutheranch executive site director. Anyone found in violation of these policies will be asked to leave the grounds immediately.



LESSONS

Lesson Structure and What to Expect

Before your lesson...

Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your scheduled lesson time so you can get your helmet on and be ready to start on time. Please do not approach a horse or begin grooming/tacking without instructor/volunteer permission.

During your lesson...

Lutheranch believes that skills on the ground are equally important to those in the saddle. Lessons are 60 minutes and a typical lesson includes 10 minutes of initial grooming and tacking, 40 minutes of mounted riding time and 10 minutes of untacking and horse care at the end of the lesson. As a part of their lesson, riders may learn skills such as blanketing, tack care, arena set up or feeding. Riders who are able to groom and tack independently may arrive early to get their horse ready and maximize time in the saddle. Riders who choose to spend extra time with ground skills (e.g. brushing horse) will NOT be granted a longer lesson time.

It is up to the instructors' discretion to decrease the length of a session for any reason including the following: rider fatiguing, rider medical problems, rider complaining of discomfort, rider being unbalanced, rider behavior problems, horse fatiguing or other horse related problems.

If a horse problem occurs we will attempt to complete your session time, if possible, on another horse. Instructors will evaluate each individual rider's needs, horse and weather situations and continue the lesson in the safest most effective way.

Lutheranch will make every effort to provide a mounted lesson. However, if there are not enough volunteers, or horses available to conduct a safe riding lesson, a ground lesson may be offered in place of the riding session.

If there are unsafe weather conditions (e.g. lightning) a ground lesson may be substituted for a mounted lesson.

After your lesson...

It is the rider's responsibility to ensure that all tack and equipment are put away properly and horse has been properly cared for prior to leaving. This may include feeding, blanketing or turning out a horse. Please do not leave without checking with volunteer/instructor to be sure all tasks have been completed.

Cancellations/Make-Up Lessons

Riders pay tuition for a 10-week session and sessions are designated with one make-up lesson built in on the 11th week to allow for absence on the part of the student or cancelation due to weather, sickness or schedule on the part of Lutheranch. If a rider attends all 10 of their lessons and Lutheranch has no cancelations due to weather etc., the additional lesson is a bonus free lesson.

No additional make-up lessons will be given, with the following exceptions:

- If a rider knows they will be absent **ahead of time** AND they are able to attend another lesson the same week at the same riding level, they will be allowed to do so. They will not be allowed to carry an absence over into another week and this must be scheduled at least ONE WEEK PRIOR to the planned switch of days. A rider may only take advantage of this twice/session.
- If Lutheranch has to cancel more than one lesson due to instructor illness, weather, scheduling etc., an additional make-up lesson will be granted.

Lessons will happen rain or shine in all kinds of weather. **Unless you receive a call from Lutheranch, there WILL be a lesson!** If there is lightening or other conditions that make it unsafe to ride, a ground lesson may be substituted for a mounted lesson. If lessons are held and a rider chooses not to attend due to cold, heat or rain, there will be no makeup lesson other than the lesson the 11th week of the session. Riders who call in sick the day of a lesson will not be granted a makeup lesson other than the lesson the 11th week of the session.

Tardiness

Any time a rider is late their lesson time will be decreased accordingly in order for the schedule to remain intact. **In fairness to other students in a group lesson, if a rider is 15 or more minutes late for a lesson they may not be allowed to ride for that lesson and no make-up will be given.**

Any time the Lutheranch program is running late (as we will at times) we will do our best to get back on schedule. We will offer the riders their full session time although this may include an overlap in lessons (e.g. one class cools out their horses while the next class warms up)

Inclement Weather (heat, cold, rain, etc.)

Lutheranch is grateful for a covered arena and barn and well-shaded trails as well as classroom space and a large barn. Unless you hear directly from Lutheranch staff, lessons will continue and will not be canceled due to heat, cold, rain or other weather. It is the rider's responsibility to dress appropriately for the weather conditions. **Should a rider choose not to attend lesson, no refund or make-up will be granted.** If Lutheranch cancels, the 11th lesson of the session will be considered the make-up. If Lutheranch

cancels more than one week of lessons due to weather, Lutheranch will provide an additional makeup for the missed lesson.

Rider Dismissal & Discharge Policy

It is at the discretion of Lutheranch Staff to accept or remove a rider from the program. Riders who do not adhere to the rules and code of conduct, or meet the guidelines for eligibility are subject to dismissal or discharge. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to: conduct endangering another participant, staff, volunteer or horse, conduct endangering themselves, consistent failure to follow safety procedures with respect to the horses & facility, a gain in weight above the Lutheranch maximum levels, frequent cancellations or no shows or the development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point equine assisted activities are no longer beneficial or could be harmful to the participant or where safety for the rider or others has become a concern.

Riders at Lutheranch shall have no history of inappropriate behavior or any tendencies or history of abuse or violence directed toward other people or animals. Lutheranch reserves the right to deny services to any individual based upon concerns for the applicant's safety and/or the safety of the horses, volunteers, staff, facility, or for other reasons in accordance with PATH, Intl. operating center guidelines.

No rider will be dismissed without an opportunity to discuss the reasons with the program director and, as appropriate, executive site director.

Weight Limitations for All Riders

Maximum weights are listed below; however, decisions regarding participation will be based on the availability of a suitable horse related to the height, weight, cognition and balance of the participant.

The maximum weight for riders cannot exceed 300 pounds. The weight limit may be lower as determined by available equines and the ability of staff and volunteers to safely support the rider at the time services are requested. Lutheranch staff will evaluate the participant's weight and physical abilities to determine if riding is a safe and appropriate activity based on available equine, staff and volunteers.

Weight limits apply as follows:

- 300 lbs. for a well-balanced centered rider not requiring side walkers.
- 220 lbs. for an unbalanced rider needing side walker assistance.
- Each horse has individual weight limitations based upon the horses height, weight, age and physical and medical condition.
- Not all horses can manage the maximum weights listed above.
- Weights are checked once/year on medical update and additionally as needed at the discretion of the program director

Confidentiality

All medical/personal information shared with Lutheranch is held in strict confidentiality and shared with volunteers/staff on a need to know basis. Information is shared when it will help to keep a rider safe. All volunteers and staff sign a policy of confidentiality. Rider information is not shared with other parties (schools, medical professionals, etc.) without express written permission of participant or parent/guardian.

Conflict Resolution

Open, honest communication is key. If a rider or parent/guardian has an issue or concern with someone else at the barn (another rider, parent, volunteer or instructor), they should first go to that person and share their concern with a third, unbiased party present. If they are unable to resolve it, the concern should be brought to the attention of the program director who will meet with both parties. If necessary, the executive site director will become involved.

NOTE: Lutheranch has a zero tolerance policy for verbal or physical abuse. Any concerns about potential abuse should be brought immediately and directly to the program director or executive site director.

VOLUNTEERING

We highly encourage all parents and non-riding siblings over the age of 14 to attend a volunteer training and become an equestrian volunteer. Because our program relies heavily on volunteers, there is always the chance that we may have volunteer no-shows or cancellations. It is very helpful to the instructor to know that we have trained parents able to step in for absent volunteers. This will also enable your rider to continue with their mounted session as planned.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU AT THE BARN!!!!

Please remember to keep this packet for future reference.